

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" (Ps. 60:4)

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Two Vital Areas Related to Divine Worship

The Knowledge of Sin and Salvation

By Fred O. Blakely

Two crucial areas of ignorance experientially separate people from spiritual fellowship with God. They are those involved in the statement of our subject: ignorance of sin and ignorance of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). It is "for lack of knowledge" on these vital subjects, as Hosea would say (Hos. 4:6), that multitudes, willingly or otherwise, remain personally alienated from "the Presence of the Lord," and the joy and peace of His salvation (II Th. 1:9). Consequently, the ministry of knowledge at these points is of first importance in the endeavor to deliver people from "the power of darkness" and usher them into the realm of light (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13). That is the undertaking to which we are committed at this time, and for the execution of which we implore the help of God.

Solomon, a great counselor concerning such matters, asserts that wisdom---which is nothing more than knowledge properly possessed and applied---is "a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her" and "retain her" (Prov. 3:18). "Through knowledge shall the just be delivered," he declares in another place (ch. 11:9). Hence, the wise king's declaration and exhortation: "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (ch. 4:5, 7).

In no sphere are this pronouncement and incitement so applicable as in that regarding the knowledge of sin and salvation. We do well, therefore, to inquire diligently into these matters, since such knowledge shall bring "health" to our "navel" and marrow" to our "bones," as Solomon remarks elsewhere (Prov. 3:7-8)---a metaphorical expression denoting the complete spiritual well-being which results from a proper fear of God and eschewal of evil.

The Knowledge of Sin

In the experience of such well-being, one's recognition of the deadliness of sin and his vehement hatred of, and departure from, it are of prime importance. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil," is the divine command (Ps. 97:10), and, "Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Tim. 2:19). It is written, again, that "God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities," not in clinging to them and wallowing in them (Acts 3:26).

Its Heinousness and Atrociousness. An adequate knowledge of sin must include awareness of its heinousness and atrociousness. In this day, when these qualities of transgression have been virtually obscured by sheer impudence toward God and the concerted glorification of rebellion against Him, there is peculiar and pressing need for this awareness. Sin is the expression of basic enmity or hostility to God, being overt insurrection against

Him. It is the creature defiantly lifting himself up in opposition to the Creator. Thus, John's definition of sin as "the transgression of the law" (I Jn. 3:4), which law was the declaration of God's will for the regulation of men.

There can be nothing more abominable in God's sight than such anarchy in his creatures. By His very Nature, He is sovereign Ruler of all the works of His hand. To deny this by refusal to be ruled by Him (Lk. 19:14, 27), is a direct attack upon His Godhood (Isa. 14:12-15), and so is considered insurrection of the first order. Accordingly, the divine edict is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4; cf. Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23; I Cor. 15:56-57). Actually, this is necessarily the case, if God is to continue as Such. To permit an impenitent sinner to live before Him, would be for God to depose Himself. Hence, we read, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." And, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam. 15:22-23).

The atrociousness of sin is evinced by its consequences. It separates from God, because He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil," and can "not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-3). "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. 7:11). "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18). When it is recognized that God made man for fellowship with Himself, and that man's only true fulfillment is found in that fellowship, the unutterable awfulness of that which deprives him of its experience--sin--begins to appear.

The Source of Its Knowledge. Although all people are constituted sinners by their very human nature (Ps. 51:5; Isa. 48:8), it is one of the ironies of that nature that they become spiritually aware of the dire gravity of that circumstance only by divine revelation. Left to unilluminated reason, no one would ever come to cognizance of the actual character of sin. The Gentiles were a classic demonstration of that. In the apostolic usage, their utter obtuseness in this area was proverbial: ". . . not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God" (I Th.. 4:5); ". . . that ye walk henceforth not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind . . . being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them . . . who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4:17-19). Moderns update the illustration of man's natural ignorance of sin. Today, when God's Word on the subject has been studiedly eradicated from the public mind, sin is rampant, with apparently any consciousness of its awful pollution and soul-damning consequences wholly banished.

Only God knows the full measure of sin's abominableness; thus, man must learn of it from Him, if man is to possess that knowledge. Accordingly, we read, "By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). Again, "the strength of sin is the law" (I Cor. 15:56). We are told that the purpose of the law was "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful," that is, be made apparent to man in all of its evil and deadly nature (Rom. 7:13). "I had not known sin, but by the law," the Apostle declares: "for I had

(KNOWLEDGE, Continued on Page 10)

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An Environment with No Temple

"And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" (Rev. 21:22, RSV).

"I saw no temple . . ." In this particular vision, in which the angel was showing John the bride, the Lamb's wife, John considered well and observed that there was no temple in that city (at least, not one in the sense of which he had been accustomed to thinking). This was an environment without a temple! It was a place that did not require a temple: an environment where there were no sinful pollutions to be cleansed of, or to abstain from. Throughout the broad expanse of the redeemed personalities which comprise this metropolis, God's abiding Presence and the Presence of the Lamb pervade every quarter and wonderfully infiltrate all the thoughts and intents of every heart. In that city, there is no purpose, or deed, or action, or consideration, where God and

the Lamb are not marvelously preeminent!

The tempter is not there, for he has been cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). There is no sinful body to contend with, for mortality has now been swallowed up of life (II Cor. 5:4)! And there are no longer any sinful defilements to keep oneself from, for nothing that defiles can enter into that city. "And no resident" there "will say, 'I am sick,'" for "the people who dwell there" have been "forgiven their iniquity" (Isa. 33:24, NASB).

In that city there is no longer any need to put forth strenuous effort to get one's self to a location where the Presence of God is, or to a state of heart and mind where God's Presence is more readily perceived, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of" the city (Rev. 21:22).

"Temple" Used in a Different Sense. The word "temple" is used in another sense in the Revelation. To the church at Philadelphia the Lord Jesus promised: "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore" (3:12, NASB). And again, "For this reason (*that of having washed their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb*), they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them" (7:15, NASB). Both of these texts seem to imply that there is a wicked, hostile environment to be sheltered from. But in our judgment, they are simply an accommodation to our limited understanding. The people of God in every age have known nothing other than an evil, belligerent environment in this world: surroundings from which they must diligently keep and preserve themselves.

It is no wonder, then, that the absence of a temple in that city made an impression upon John, significant enough for him to make mention of it. One of the essential thoughts contained in the word "temple," as it is used in the verses mentioned in the above paragraph, is that God was instructing men regarding the necessity of making "difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean" (Lev. 10:10; cf. Ezek. 22:26; 44:23). The "temple" implies a surrounding environment that is completely defiled because of sin (cf. I Jn. 5:19), and the "temple" is the holy place in that environment where God has appointed that His Presence would abide.

It will also be recalled that David, being instructed in the law of God from his youth, properly associated God's Presence upon earth with a particular place, namely the tabernacle, (which was later replaced by Solomon's temple). He even envied birds, which were able to build their nests in closer proximity to that appointed place than he was permitted to come (cf. Ps. 84:1-4, see v. 10 NASB). [Incidentally, David did not regard the tabernacle as empty religious tradition, handed down from generation to generation. He perceived somewhat of its wonderful significance and what it was foreshadowing (cf. Heb. 8:5). He often delighted to think of himself dwelling in God's house, even forever (Ps. 84:4; 23:6; 27:4; 65:4; cf. I Sam. 4:4; II Kgs. 19:15)].

What a gross inconsistency it is that David longed for that accommodating Presence of God that was there in the tabernacle, but he was held at bay from it because he was not of the tribe of Levi. But now that sins have been put away by Christ, and the Presence of God is available to all who will "repent" and "be converted" (Acts 3:19), men generally hold themselves at bay from it, refusing to meet the demands that the Savior makes upon them for coming unto Him. What a paradox!

In Conclusion. In conclusion, let us examine our hearts to see that we are not found wanting here. And let us then, by our faith, seek grace from the Lord that we may accustom ourselves to the blessed undefiled environment that shall soon be upon us, where there is "no temple." Let us yearn for it! Let us long for it, to the praise of God's glory! --Editor

Christ's Betrayal

By James P. Harrison

Three short years of ministry is closing to an end,
Just outside the garden lies a group of sleeping men.
Jesus leans upon a rock as He prayed so earnestly,
"Father, if it be Thy will, Let this cup pass from Me."
Somewhere in the distance soldiers are on the way,
And with one kiss upon His cheek,
The Son of Man is betrayed

In the garden, in the garden, where He prayed,
The sins of the world on His shoulders they did weigh.
So the Prophets and the Scriptures,
and ALL should be fulfilled,
In the distance lies Golgotha, a cross and a lonely hill

They put Him through a trial and they sentenced Him to die,
This condemnation some could never tell you why?
For ever Pilate said, "I find no fault in Him
I cannot see where you say this Man has sinned.
But I have a custom that I should turn one loose to you,
Barabbas or Jesus, Now which one will you choose?"

Barabbas, Barabbas, is what the crowd had yelled,
Crucify the King, the King of Is-ra-el
There He stood, His face in open shame,
For the crowd had called another
and Barabbas was his name

Roman soldiers marched Him down that dusty road,
The cross He carried became such a heavy load.
They nailed Him to a cross and stood there to watch Him die,
They crowned His head with a crown of thorns,
and pierced His precious side.

Then a violent storm began to rise, the earth began to shake,
The graves were split wide open as the dead began to wake.
And just before He died, with a love so warm and true,
He said, "Father, please forgive them,
for they know not what they do

On the cross, on the cross, He prayed,
As the sins of the world, on His shoulders they did weigh.
So that the Prophets and the Scriptures,
and ALL should be fulfilled,
Jesus died upon Golgotha, on that cross on a lonely hill

A Note to our Readers. James P. Harrison is a death row inmate at a state prison nearby. We have printed the above poem, written by him and sent in to us, so that our readers may profit from his expressed love and devotion for the Savior. I will be happy to furnish his address to any that would like to write and comfort him in this time of great trial and affliction. --Editor

From the Poem's Author. "Dear Al, Thank you for your letter and the issue of "The Banner of Truth." I would also like to thank Dean Boelt for sending a few back issues. I am sending you a few of my poems in hopes that you can use them in *The Banner of Truth*. I also hope that I will be able to continue to receive *The Banner of Truth* even though I do not have the funds for the publication. You must know that men on death row don't get to work and

"Withhold not Thou Thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth continually preserve me."

"With the greatness of God established in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, the matter of God's only Son is consequently very special." --Michael Lohrman

About Empty Religious Talk. "Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins (i.e., from their mind, their inward parts, their inmost being)" (Jer. 12:2). There is such a thing as religious "talk" where the "talkers," though they say many of the right things, are shamelessly unaffected by the message contained in God's Word. Let us examine our hearts and "reins" to see that we are not guilty of this! --Editor

Regarding Questionable Situations. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven" (Mt. 5:16). From time to time some of God's people will be heard asking whether certain involvements or practices are lawful for them to engage in. These unlearned individuals ought to ask themselves whether or not the light, which has been given to them by the Savior, is able to shine in those questionable situations. If their light is, without question, shining before men, then such illuminating associations are certainly well-pleasing in the sight of God, and are being used by Him for the furtherance of His kingdom. But, on the other hand, wherever certain activities, practices, associations cause the light to be suppressed, those are the sort of things that must be avoided at whatever cost. --Editor

Drunkness, an Unlawful Avenue of Escape. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). "Social drinking" (as men call it today) and, especially, outright drunkness are temporary means of escaping from life's day-to-day troubles and woes. This is a way of escape, however, that does not have the Divine approval (cf. Lk. 21:34; Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Gal. 5:19-21). In drunkness, the Lord God is recklessly excluded from being the moment-by-moment and sorely-needed source of "refuge and strength" for men (cf. Ps. 46:1).

Being filled with the Spirit, on the other hand, is an acceptable "way of escape" from life's excruciating vexations and trials, to which God is constantly summoning men. By submitting to this Apostolic injunction (Eph. 5:18), men are granted, among other things, a nobler perspective of their own troublesome circumstances that makes them to be more bearable. Being filled with the Spirit is the fruitage of letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (cf. Col. 3:16), and of hearts being filled with God's thoughts (from the Scriptures). By being so filled men are enabled to rejoice in God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and often to mount up on eagles' wings (cf. Isa. 40:31), even though they are called upon to trudge through the "many" (cf. Ps. 34:19) troubled waters of adversity here in this world. --Editor

(Concluded from Previous Column)

make any money. We are locked in our cells 23 hours a day, seven days a week. The prison gives us 10 free letters a month, but that is about all. Thanks again for your kindness. Because of Calvary, James P. Harrison."

Some Thoughts about Suffering

By Jesse Stoner

Suffering, as defined in Webster's New World dictionary, is the bearing or undergoing of pain, distress or injury. The church at Corinth was suffering due to the letter that Paul wrote, while Paul suffered due to his ministry in Asia. (The Roman province of that name in western Asia Minor, now Turkish territory. The precise location where Paul's hardships occurred is not mentioned, nor is the nature of the affliction.) The second letter to the Corinthians discusses the problem of pain and how God uses it for the furthering of the kingdom. Suffering is not anything that is unfamiliar to the human race. It does, however, take on a new significance when suffering is "for Christ." In Second Corinthians, Paul, by the Holy Spirit, tells of God's positive use of suffering in the lives of the Christian.

Though Paul is suffering in Asia, he begins his letter with praise to God for His compassion. It may seem that Paul is merely trying to remain optimistic though surrounded by distress in his ministry to Asia. Though it may appear to be the case, it is the fruit of the Spirit that allows him to be thankful although he is suffering; a thought which leads right into the next few verses.

As Paul continues, he addresses the very nature of God in an inductive manner. To illustrate: God is infinite, we are finite. Therefore, the attributes of God are also infinite, whereas our attributes and even our events are finite; events that we endure are finite, or momentary. Paul points out that although we suffer, the God of all ("every" is a better translation) comfort is a compassionate Father. His comfort is unending. It is infinite so that we are comforted in all of our tribulations and weaknesses.

Our compassionate Father does not comfort us merely for our own benefit. Instead, He comforts us so that we may comfort others. It is the same principle as John's commentary on love. We know how to love others because we know God and His love for us (I Jn. 3:16-20). Therefore, we know how to comfort others who suffer because we have suffered, and have been comforted by God Himself.

It is not a new teaching that Paul brings to light in verse five, but something that is time-tested. Jesus once said "if the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!" (Mt. 10:25)" Suffering, then, is to be expected when someone decides to follow Christ. The element that is unusual to human understanding is that although one suffers for Christ, Christ supplies overflowing comfort. This comfort of Christ provides endurance, so that if someone were to think that they could no longer survive, the comfort of Christ provides the increase. Truly, this is an encouragement to those who have decided to follow the Savior, but met with adversity in their decision.

Paul continues in verse eight to let the Corinthian congregation know about the suffering they have endured while ministering in Asia. He does not give much detail except that they are despaired even of life. Instead, Paul once again puts the correct emphasis on God rather than these "light and momentary afflictions." It is the correct emphasis because it is God Himself who is the center of all importance. The ministry in Asia is not about Paul's qualifications as a public speaker. The church at Corinth is not there because of Paul. Everything is centered on the Father and the Son because They are the reason of everything. Relying on God is an essential principle of this letter, as well as throughout the Scripture. God's grace is all-sufficient, and our weakness is precisely the opportunity for his power to be displayed (II Cor. 12:9-10). --
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About Delighting in God's Presence

"O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD" (Isa. 2:5). "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:8-9).

During Isaiah's time, the children of Israel were occupied with their religion, but they had lost the light of the Lord because their heart had turned from Him. They had the temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifices. But because they had turned their heart away from God, they were in darkness. They were not walking in the light. Therefore, Isaiah called them to come and walk in the light of the Lord. This was a call to repent and to confess their sins and iniquities in order to be brought again into the light of the Lord's Presence.

Psalms 36:8 and 9 describe a person who is delighting in the Lord's Presence. Such a one is satisfied with the fatness of God's house and drinks of the river of the Lord's pleasures. He knows the Lord to be "the fountain of life," and in the light of the Lord he sees light. In this light the portion of the saints becomes his enjoyment.

Let us, then, seek grace to abide in Christ and to walk in the light of life (Jn. 8:12) that we may partake more fully of the light which the Savior has to give to men (cf. Eph. 5:14). Let us earnestly desire that we may have more and more fellowship with the Lord through and in His Word. Let us read His Word with an unveiled face and an open heart. As we fellowship with the Lord and follow Him, we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. As we live and walk by faith, let us see that we take for ourselves the portion that belongs to us of delighting in God's Presence. --
Substantially Revised by the Banner editor from E-manna

On Doing the Will of God

"The end of life is not to do good, although many of us think so. It is not to win souls, although I once thought so. The end of life is to do the will of God. That may be in the line of doing good or winning souls, or it may not. The maximum achievement of any man's life, after it is all over, is to have done the will of God. No man or woman can have done any more with a life; no Luther, no Spurgeon, no Wesley, no Melancthon can have done any more with their lives; and a dairy maid or a scavenger can do as much. Therefore, the supreme principle upon which we have to run our lives is to adhere, through good report or ill, through temptation and prosperity and adversity, to the will of God, wherever that may lead us." --Henry Drummond

We would have you consider the following words of the Scripture. "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God" (I Th. 4:3-5, NIV). "Give thanks in all circumstances; for **this is the will of God** in Christ Jesus for you" (I Th. 5:18, RSV). "For so is **the will of God**, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (I Pet. 2:15). "You no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to **the will of God**" (I Pet. 4:2).

It would be well to take a concordance and carefully consider the many specific references to the will of God with the mind to do it. God's will for men is His revealed expectation and anticipation that believing men and women should be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29), that they should be "holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1:4). --Editor

Some Sacred Logic

By Given O. Blakely

There is a manner of reasoning that pervades this text, and upon which the it is founded. As you might expect, it is not a worldly principle of thought, or law of logic. When it comes to the apprehension of the things of the Spirit, God has reduced the world's loftiest wisdom to foolishness, showing it to be impotent in matters relating to justification, sanctification, and the glorification of men.

The altar which we have been given, and at which we eat the sacrifice for sin, was typified in the Passover, as already pointed out. During that time, prior to Israel's exodus from Egypt, the people ate the passover lamb (Exod. 12:7-10). It was also foreshadowed in the sacrifices offered under the Law--particularly the sacrifices for sin. Those shadows were divers and crude, casting only a faint reflection of the greater sacrifice of Christ. For example, the people themselves could eat of the flesh of some of the peace offerings (Lev. 7:11-20). The flesh of the ordinary sin offerings could only be eaten by the priest, and that only in the sanctuary (Deut. 12:27).

Thus God introduced the idea of the people partaking of something sacrificed unto Him for them. However, the highest offering, presented on the day of atonement, could be eaten by no one. Our text now refers to that sacrifice. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp" (Heb. 13:11).

The Day of Atonement Briefly Outlined. For this sacrifice, offered once a year, on the day of atonement, a special law was given. Here is a brief outline of the procedure. I am taking the time to list it because it confirms the seriousness of sin, and the effectiveness of Christ's atonement for it. Take note of it, for it is a picture of both the nature of sin and the thoroughness of Christ's sacrifice for it. This is found in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus.

1. The high priest came into the holy place with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering (verse 3).

2. After bathing himself with water, the high priest put on his appointed attire--"holy garments" (verse 4).

3. From the community of Israel two male goats were taken for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering (verse 5).

4. The young bull was reserved for the high priest himself, whereby he would make an atonement for himself and his house (verse 6).

5. The two goats were presented before the Lord at the entrance of the tabernacle (verse 7).

6. By casting lots, one goat was chosen for the Lord, and the other to be a "scapegoat" (verse 8).

7. The goat chosen for the Lord was offered as a sin offering (verse 9).

8. The "scapegoat" was presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with it. It would then be released in the wilderness (verse 10).

9. The young bull was then killed, to make an atonement for the high priest and his house (verse 11).

10. A censer was filled with hot coals from the altar, and the high priest's hands filled with sweet incense, beaten very small. The priest entered into the holiest place with these things (verse 12).

11. When in the holiest place, the incense was placed upon the hot coals, emitting a fragrant cloud that covered the mercy seat that was on the ark of the covenant (verse 13).

12. With his finger, the high priest sprinkled the blood of the young bull seven times on the mercy seat. This was done on the East, or front side, of the mercy seat (verse 14).

13. The goat of the sin offering was then killed for the people,

and its blood brought within the holiest place precisely as with the young bull (verse 15).

14. Atonement was then made for the holy place itself, and the tabernacle, because they had been defiled by the sins of the people (verse 16).

15. No person was allowed in the tabernacle when the high priest went into the most holy place to make atonement for himself, his house, and the people of Israel (verse 17).

16. The high priest then cleansed the altar upon which the sacrifices were offered, sprinkling the blood of the young bull and the goat upon it, and putting the blood upon the horns of the altar (verses 18-19).

17. After making atonement for the holy place and the tabernacle, the living goat was brought to the high priest (verse 20).

18. The high priest placed both of his hands upon the head of the goat, confessing the sins of the people, putting them upon the head of the goat. The goat was then sent by an able person into the wilderness (verse 21).

19. The "scapegoat," carrying the sins of the people, was taken to a solitary and uninhabited land, and released (verse 22).

20. The high priest then removed his linen vestments, leaving them in the holy place (verse 23).

21. The high priest bathed himself with water, put on his priestly attire, and came out of the tabernacle to complete the offering of the young bull and the goat (verse 24).

22. The fat of the sin offering was burned upon the altar (verse 25).

23. The person who had released the "scapegoat" in the wilderness washed his clothes, bathed himself, and returned to the camp (verse 26).

24. The young bull and the goat, whose blood was offered for atonement, were carried outside the camp, where their skin, flesh, and dung were consumed with fire (verse 27).

25. The person burning the young bull and goat washed his clothes, bathed himself, and returned to the camp (verse 28).

Christ has Fulfilled Every Part. The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled every part of this extensive procedure. Note what was involved under the law. (1) The priest, (2) a young bull, (3) two goats, (3) two rams, (4) an able person to take the goat into the wilderness, and (5) a person to burn the sacrifices outside of the camp. Jesus is at once all of these. He is the High Priest, the sacrifices, the one who took sin away, and the one going outside the camp.

Every jot and tittle of this procedure is fulfilled in Christ. The Law was detailed and extensive, as confirmed in the revealed routine. However, the salvation which it foreshadowed is even more detailed and extensive.

Sin had created a dilemma that could only be resolved by the voluntary and effective offering of Jesus Christ. Should you ever be tempted to minimize sin, or imagine that God can wink at it or view your involvement in it with indifference, you do well to think again.

Just as the "bodies of those beasts" were consumed by fire "without the camp," so Jesus "suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12). In a very real sense, Christ's atonement was made in isolation. His death did not occur in the temple court, or within proximity of the altar for burnt offering. He was crucified outside of the city of Jerusalem, "the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull" (Mk. 15:22) -- outside of the camp.

He also suffered in spiritual isolation, treading out the winepress of the wrath of God "alone" (Isa. 63:3), cursed and forsaken by God (Gal. 3:13; Mt. 27:46).

Our sin required this kind of sacrifice. The altar from which we partake also necessitated this most detailed atonement. The sins of Israel were typically transferred to the living goat. Our sins were really "laid on" Jesus by God Himself, as He "bore our sins in His

body on the tree" (Isa. 53:6; I Pet. 2:24).

This is the kind of reasoning that undergirds our text. There is no manner of earthly logic that can contain such lofty conceptions. --406 S. Sergeant St., Joplin, MO 64801

Do Not Be Troubled!

By Given O. Blakely

"But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet." (Mk. 13:7, NKJV).

Jesus was in the process of telling His disciples of awesome events that were coming upon the earth. Some of them related to the destruction of Jerusalem, and some to the end of the world. There was nothing about His words that was merely academic. They were arresting words that tended to startle the soul and make the heart tremble. Recall some of His words. "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down . . . For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles . . . they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues . . . brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death . . . the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken" (vv. 2-25). Yet, the Lord admonishes His disciples, "do not be troubled!"

A troubled heart is a fearful one, agitated by circumstances over which the individual has no power. When our heart is troubled, it stirs up unbelief and despair, just as though there was no God. We must do all within our power to not allow this to happen. As Jesus said to His disciples on the eve of His betrayal, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (Jn. 14:27).

The Lord gave His disciples two reasons for not allowing their hearts to be troubled. First, the things that were going to occur "must happen." They were things appointed by God, Who is always mindful of His people. There are no Divine appointments that do not take the elect into consideration, not allowing them to be tempted above what they are able to bear. Second, there was more to come: "the end is not yet." In Matthew's record of this occasion, the Lord said, "All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Mt. 24:8). Yet the Lord exhorts, "do not be troubled!"

If there is something that can trouble the heart, it is "wars and rumors of wars," nation rising against nation, earthquakes, pestilence, and the disruption of the natural order. Yet, the believer must not allow his heart to be troubled about these things.

Some choose to speculate about the Savior's sayings. They conveniently conclude that our Lord's words applied to another day and time, and have nothing to do with us. A handy bit of theology for unbelief, but it will not do for those who take our Lord's words seriously. While much of what Jesus said applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, it is apparent everything He said was not so confined.

The point of Jesus words is that everything is under Divine control. The government—all of it—is upon the shoulder of Jesus. He will bring forth judgment to victory (Mt. 12:20)—and the saints will share in that triumph. The collapse of governments, social fabric, and nature itself has no bearing upon the "eternal salvation" we have received in Christ Jesus. The God to Whom we have been reconciled has our interests in heart. He has appointed a King to administer His Kingdom Who consistently considers His people. He has sent forth the Holy Spirit to work with them, convincing them of the good future that awaits them (Rom. 5:13). Even the holy angels have been dispatched to minister to the saints (Heb. 1:13-

14).

There really is no reason why we should be troubled—agitated at the prospect of political and social upheaval. We surely do not delight in such things, but He that is in us is greater than all of that (cf. I Jn. 4:4). --GivenB@aol.com

Christ's Preeminence Practically Viewed

By Given O. Blakely

As the "Beginning," Jesus is the First of the new order. He determines the nature, or character, of all those who follow Him. To put it another way, the Divine determination is that they will become like Him (Rom. 8:29). In the end, when those in Christ see Him as He is, they will "be like Him" (I Jn. 3:1-2). The prospect of this constrains the individual to "purify himself, even as He is pure" (I Jn. 3:3).

Christ's life is the preeminent life, and His will is the dominant will. Anything and everything opposed to Him will be brought to dissolution. None of those refusing to build upon Him will survive their ultimate confrontation of Him. Everyone choosing to honor the Corner Stone will rejoice in the day of judgment. He is "the Beginning" of the only building God will finally honor; "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15).

At the point an individual or a congregation ceases to function in strict parallel and accord with Christ, the will and blessing of God have been forfeited. In such a case, Jesus has been rejected as the Beginning, or Corner Stone, of Divine purpose. It should be obvious to you that this condition is altogether common in the religious world. A myriad of people have willingly adopted a religious stance that does not afford Jesus the preeminent position. They have rejected God's Corner Stone! Of such, whoever they may be, it is written: "Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,' and 'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.' They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed" (I Pet. 2:7-8, NKJV). --406 S. Sergeant St., Joplin, MO 64801

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16).

"Oh, who can strive
To comprehend the vast, the awful truth
Of the eternity that hath gone by,
And not recoil from the dismaying sense
Of human impotence? The life of man
Is summed in birthdays and in sepulchres;
But the eternal God hath no beginning;
He hath no end."

--The Pulpit Commentary

The Glory of God's Truth and Word

By Fred O. Blakely

This subject can be said to comprehend the soul and body of a vital aspect of the Divine glory. This is because the truth and the Word of God may be considered as being so related. The truth of God is the genuine and precise representation of the nature of persons, things, situations, or doctrines--as they really are, without any gloss or obscurement whatever. The Word of God is the vehicle, or instrument, of expression which He has chosen to convey intelligence of that circumstance--His means of informing men and angels of the reality of the case in point. Thus, the Divine Word is the disclosure of the ultimate actuality, which otherwise is hidden from men's apprehension. The Word's transcendent glory is denoted by the fact that God has magnified it above all His Name (Ps. 138:20), making it preeminently honorable (Isa. 42:21).

The Word, an Expression of God's Life. Primary to the glory associated with God's Word is the fact that it is an expression of the very life of God. "It is the breath of His lips--God-breathed; and so it is never a 'dead letter,' but always quick with spiritual life, and ready to enliven. Its words are not dead words," but proceed from Him who "lives for ever and ever." Moses, it will be recalled, is said to have received from God the "living oracles to give 'unto us'" (Acts 7:38, ASV).

The circumstance of the Word's liveliness makes it a manifestation of the Divine glory. God is in the Word; hence the Word reveals Him, and glorifies Him in that revelation. Those who turn from the written Scriptures, and expect to be led by God's Spirit in dissociation therefrom, choose to disregard this unimpeachable situation. In the Divine calling and discipline of men, the Spirit does not ordinarily work independently of the Word, but through it. To weigh anchor from this bedrock reality is to invite certain shipwreck of the faith, with the spiritual disaster which that entails.

The Declarations of Scripture. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," proclaimed Jesus. That is, they are "the pure incarnation of the Spirit and the vehicle of life." It is as if, in this key declaration, He said, The words which I have spoken at all times have been the effulgence of My glory, the effluence of My Spirit. "The seed [of the kingdom] is the Word of God," it will be recalled He asserted on another occasion (Lk. 8:11), which is another way of saying that the Word possesses the life of God. Peter, recognizing this, exclaimed, "Thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68).

"The Word of God," affirms the writer of Hebrews, "is quick [living, ASV, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (ch. 4:12-13). Evincing its life-endued property is the fact that the Word is God's instrument for the procreation within men of His very life. "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth" (Jas. 1:18; cf. Ps. 119:50; 1 Cor. 4:15). "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet. 1:13, ASV; cf. v. 25).

So inextricably is the Divine Word associated with the Divine Life, that for one to blaspheme the Word through refusal to submit to it is to blaspheme God Himself (Acts 13:45-46; Rom. 2:23-24; 1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:3-5), and to resist the Word is to resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51-53). This is a great mystery to the carnal mind, but it is nonetheless a great and central verity. As the life of Jacob was "bound up" in that of Benjamin--in an inferior sense--as Judah put

it (Gen. 44:30), so is the very life of God veritably bound up in His Word.

An Axiomatic Situation. From this circumstance an axiomatic situation becomes evident: To duly love and understand the Word, we must be given to imbibe the life of God. Thus, the declaration of the Apostle that we are "renewed unto knowledge" (Col. 3:10, ASV). As we have indicated, God's Word contains and expresses not only His will, but His life as well. Hence, only those who live unto God delight in, understand, and are nourished by the truth, or the Word of God. "He that is of God heareth God's words," is the rule laid down by Jesus. "Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God," was His indictment of the Pharisees (Jn. 8:47; cf. v. 44; 1 Jn. 4:6). "Why do ye not understand My speech? Even because ye cannot hear My Word" (v. 43). And they could not hear His Word because they "were not of God" (cf. Acts 13:27). It is only as we "live, and move, and have our being" in God that His Word will take on its innate luster and, minister its sustaining nourishment and joy to us (Acts 17:28).

You who have no keen delight in the Word, there is only one reason for your deficiency, and it is a terrible and tragic one. You have not His Spirit and life abiding in you (cf. Jn. 5:37-40). The remedy for your disinterest in the Word and your lack of comprehending it is not more Bible translations and paraphrases, or more colorful and dramatic presentation of it by religious professionals. It is to seek the Lord "while He may be found," to call upon Him "while He is near," and to forsake your evil thoughts and way, turning your footsteps unto His testimonies (Ps. 119:59; Isa. 55:6-7).

The Word of God speaks of the Divine Persons and of the Divine kingdom. It is only as we have been born into that area by Divine power that it assumes its rightful place in our hearts. Oh, that we could emphasize this enough! You "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears" (Acts 7:51)! Why stand you far off from God and expect to receive anything from His Word, which is the incarnation of His Spirit and Life! Come to the Father through the Son and live (Jn. 5:39-40)! And see the written Word come alive to you with power and life-sustaining efficacy (1 Th. 2:13)!

The Word, Like God, Fixed and Immutable. Another glory of God's Word is its eternity. In likeness to Himself, the Word is fixed, immutable, and everlasting. Although heaven and earth--including "the everlasting hills" change and shall ultimately pass away, it is not so with the Word (Mt. 24:35). It "abides for ever," and is subject to no variableness at all (1 Pet. 1:23-25; cf. Isa. 40:6-8; Jas. 1:17). This is an impregnable verity which this generation of relativism desperately needs to heed. "For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven!" is the proclamation of the situation as it is in truth (Ps. 119:89), and those who babble of elastic moral standards, and the like, stand exposed and condemned by the proclamation. "The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," is Jesus' warning to the rejecter of the Word (Jn. 12:48; cf. Acts. 13:46).

Its Fixedness in Eternity. The unchangeable fixedness of God's purposes, which are the occasion for utterance of the Word, require the Word's unflinching stability. This quality of it was graphically expressed in the angel Gabriel's remark to Daniel. Concerning his mission to the Prophet, the angel declared, "I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth" (Dan. 10:21). "But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth" (RSV). "The idea seems to be that all the events that were to happen in the world's history were recorded beforehand in the books or tablets of heaven."

In Scripture, God simply sends by the writer and signifies to those who read the things already determined in heaven (cf. Rev. 1:1). If we could only get people to understand and accept this truth, God's Word would assume its rightful authority over them, and they would be devouring it, as they are enjoined by God to do.

The Word, Sanctifying and Nourishing. The sanctifying and

nourishing qualities of the Word exhibit its glory, the glory of the God who sanctifies and sustains His people. Just as the Father, in times eternal, purposed, and set apart for Himself those who would believe on His beloved Son (Eph. 1:4; Jude 1; cf. Jn. 10:35-36), so, in the fullness of His own time, He "sent His Word" to them, thereby calling them "into the fellowship of His Son," implementing within the believing ones their purposed sanctification, and nourishing and upholding them in it (Ps. 107:20; 111:9; Isa. 9:8; Acts 10:36; 1 Cor. 1:9, ASV; Jas. 1:18; I Pet. 1:23). Thus, again is the very life of God, involving His eternal purpose in Christ, demonstrated to be in "the Word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5).

"Holy Scripture is thus energetic and efficacious because it is the Word of the Omniscient. It derives from Him who knows what is in man (Jn. 2:24-25): its subtle insight into character, and its deep hold upon the world's life. All the teachings of Scripture are an exact transcript of the nature and will of God, even the bare Word itself exercising as a Book transcendent moral influence over men. But, when accompanied with the supernatural energy of the Holy Spirit, upon which it depends for its efficacy as a means of grace, Holy Scripture becomes the very omnipotence of the Omnipotent, to arouse, convict, and condemn, as well as to comfort, sanctify, and save."

Its Representation of Itself. As we turn to the written Word of God, it is to find that this is precisely the representation which it makes of itself. "Sanctify them through Thy truth," besought Jesus of the Father, adding, "Thy Word is truth," or the exact expression thereof (Jn. 17:17). As to its life-sustaining property, both the Master and Moses proclaim. "It is written," declared the Former to the Devil, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4), which declaration, of course, was a citation of the earlier assertion of Moses (Deut. 8:3). In recognition of this principle, Paul wrote to Timothy of his being "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" (I Tim. 4:6).

In this ministry to the saints, God's Word meets their most vital needs, and so is uniquely satisfying to the spirit. It is, of a truth, the "good Word of God," of which they have "tasted," and without which they can never again be content (Heb. 6:5). Thus, the remark of our Lord, who is the Word enfleshed: "I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst" (Jn. 6:35). So also the Psalmist: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures" (Ps. 36:8). Likewise, Isaiah: "Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (ch. 55:1-3).

Its Experience by the Saints. Away back in the patriarchal era, Job knew of this efficacy of God's Word, and exclaimed, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12). The Psalms, of course, abound with similar sentiments. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart"; "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Ps. 19:8, 10). "I anticipated the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in Thy words. Mine eyes anticipated the nightwatches, that I might meditate on Thy Word" (Ps. 119: 147-148, ASV).

The Word, Prevailing for God's Purposes. A transcendent glory of the Word is its invincibly prevailing quality for the accomplishment of God's purposes. Like the Father and the Son, it will not fail nor be thwarted till it has wrought that for which it is sent forth (Isa. 42:4). In that respect also, the Word displays the innate life and power of the Almighty with which it is invested. Being "mixed with faith" in them that hear it (which faith is also from God), the Word will unfailingly "have free course" in the implementation of the Divine ends (II Th. 3:1; Heb. 4:2; cf. II Tim. 2:9).

"Every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God has a prosperous course. It is endued with life from God and runs like a swift messenger through nature and the world of man, there to melt the ice, as it were, and here to heal and save; it does not return from its course till it has given effect to the will of the Sender." "God's truth, coming down like rain or snow from heaven, does not return to Him void, but is transfigured into Christian character. 'Therefore, we may hopefully engage in the teaching and preaching of the Word; for not one lesson can be really lost.'"

Its Voice on the Subject. This is the consistent witness of the Word itself. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace," said Paul to the Ephesian elders in his last meeting with them, "which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, so that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth," declared God by the Prophet Isaiah: "it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it" (Isa. 55:10-11).

So is the outpouring of Divine truth on the minds and hearts of men wholly effectual, according to God's purpose. "There may be times when the human spokesman may question this--when he may have grave misgivings as to its utility, when it may seem unprofitable and vain. But we have the strong assurance that God's Word shall not return unto Him void--that the issue shall be one in which all surrounding nature may well take its part with jubilant acclaim (cf. Isa. 55:12-13)." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. 126:5-6; cf. Jer. 31:6).

A Vital Qualification. It needs to be remarked here, and duly noted, that God's Word will not accomplish man's purpose, but God's. It is just at this point that much frustration is encountered by those who seek to claim the Divine commitments. It is only as our purposes are brought into full accord with God's that His Word becomes powerful and effective in us. Only by wholehearted submission to the Father can we "prove," or realize in ourselves, "what is" His "good, and acceptable, and perfect will" (Rom. 12:1-2). --

The End--

I Saw One Man

"I saw one man, armed simply with God's Word,
Enter the souls of many fellow-men,
And pierce them sharply as a two-edged sword,
While conscience echoed back his words again,
Till, even as showers of fertilizing rain
Sink through the bosom of the valley clod,
So their hearts opened to the wholesome pain,
And hundreds knelt upon the flowery sod---
One good man's earnest prayer the link 'twixt them and God."

--*Caroline Norton*

The Hiding Place

By Robert Cobb

"And a Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:2).

There is a place in this present evil world where there is victory over "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I Jn. 2:16). It is not a popular place, yet it has been prepared of God to be a refuge from the storms and attacks of our enemy, the Devil. It has assisted such people as the Apostle Paul and even Jesus Christ Himself. On the surface this place seems to be the last place where we would want to dwell, and yet it is the place from which God has chosen to lead us as we run the race to glory. There are bodies of religion which endeavor to minimize the jeopardy associated with the storms of life and consequently cause men to make light of this precious covert, this hiding place from the storms.

The place of which I speak is a place which has been prepared for us "in the wilderness" (Rev. 12:6, 14): away from the face of the serpent, away from the normal toils of this cursed realm. This place is in the Presence of our Savior, and it is found by walking in the Spirit. It is, as it were, the cleft in the Rock of our salvation where we may hide. To be sure, there is no physical (geographical) place of safety in this present world, but there is nevertheless a place to which men may flee from the storms and trials of this life! It can not be seen with the natural eye, yet it can be seen with the eye of faith. It can not be apprehended with flesh and blood perceptions, but yet there is, unquestionably, a "secret place" where believing men may dwell and "abide under the" protective "shadow of the Almighty" (cf. Ps. 91:1).

We have need of a place of escape. God has not given us spiritual provisions which have no practical use. "Every word of God is pure" (Prov. 30:5). We need all of God's Word; We live by EVERY Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). We are looking for a better world to come because we have been given to see the corrupt and sinful nature of this present evil world. This present realm is "polluted" (cf. Micah 2:10); it is not our rest! We are waiting for God's Son from Heaven to come and DELIVER us. Why, because we so desperately need to be delivered! And we, that are in Christ, earnestly want to be delivered!

I would like to challenge the brethren to spend more time at the table which has been prepared for them away from the face of our enemy (cf. Rev. 12:14): to spend more time in communion with the Savior, and less time with the world. Let us give ourselves to loving God more, and self less. We have no other commitments which have such blessings attached to them as these, what will we give in exchange for the things of God? That's the matter which the Devil is seeking to find: namely, that one singular thing that he can attack us with that will cause us to leave the table of the Lord. Perhaps it is something that appears to be seemingly insignificant, but if it causes us to think more about this world and less about Heaven, then we must have done with it.

We also have an Advocate with the Father (cf. I Jn. 2:1-2)! We have been given "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:3), and we have been raised up to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (cf. Eph. 2:6). "We are more than conquerors through" our Lord, who "loved us" (cf. Rom. 8:37). We have more in Heaven than here on the earth (cf. Ps. 73:25). We have so many reasons to have a living hope that it is not reasonable to exchange Heaven for the paltry things which are passing away. There is a danger of minimizing (lightly esteeming) the talents which the Lord has given

us. This is because we have "the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24) that we are environed with, as well as the world and the Devil to contend with. Yet, this is not all we have! We have already been given "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38) at our baptism. We are already have fellowship with the Father (I Jn. 1:3)! Let us therefore seek the things which are above, where Christ is seated (Col. 3:1), and let us daily determine to let the lesser (and cursed) realm go. -
-robair@netnitco.net

Be Fearful of Little Sins

Be fearful of little sins. Take alarm at even an evil thought, wish, desire. These are the germs of sin — the floating seeds which drop into the heart, and, finding in our natural corruption a fat and favorable soil, spring up into actual transgressions. These, like the rattle of the snake and the hiss of the serpent, reveal the presence and near neighborhood of danger. The experience of all good men proves that sin is most easily crushed in the bud, and that it is safer to flee from temptation than to fight it. --*Guthrie, from the Sage Digital Library*

History Repeats Itself. It is said, "history repeats itself," and the Bible promises that God's grace and mercy on man will finally come to an end, as it did "in the days of Noah" (I Pet. 3:20), but this time permanently for those who do not accept Jesus Christ and the salvation which He has accomplished in their behalf (II Pet. 2:5-10). The question we need to ask ourselves is which side of the door (cf. Mt. 25:10; Lk. 13:25) will we be on when God seals it up for eternity? --*Terry Wellsand*

Come, Let us Join our Friends above!

"Come, let us join our friends above
That have obtained the prize,
And on the eagle-wings of love
To joy celestial rise.

"E'en now by faith we join our hands
With those that went before,
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
On that eternal shore.

"Oh that we now might grasp our Guide!
Oh that the word were given!
Come, Lord of hosts, the waves divide,
And land us all in Heaven."
--*Charles Wesley*

Anticipation

When we shall reach that heavenly shore,
So far from sin and pain;
We'll praise His Name forevermore,
And meet our loved again;
We'll count our blessings through the years,
And shout His Name with praise.
For God shall wipe away our tears,
Through all the endless days.
--*Author Unknown*

(KNOWLEDGE, Continued from Page 1)

not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (vv. 7-11).

The law of God, especially as it was interpreted by Jesus, then, is "that which ascertains what sin is; shows how men have deviated from its righteous demands; and sentences them to death because they have broken it. Thus, the law is properly considered as the rule of right; and, unless God had given some such means of discovering what sin is, the darkened heart of man could never have formed an adequate conception of it. For, as an acknowledged straight edge is the only way in which the straightness or crookedness of a line can be determined, so the moral obliquity of human actions can only be determined by the law of God--that rule of right which proceeds from His own immaculate holiness."

"The law is the straight rule--that which points out the right and the wrong. It is the proper use and intendment of the law to open the wound, and therefore it is not likely to be the remedy. That which is searching is not sanative. Those that would know sin must get the knowledge of the law in its strictness, extent, and spiritual nature. If we compare our own hearts and lives with the rule, we shall discover we have turned aside."

The Good Results of Its Awareness. The necessity of a genuine knowledge of sin is apparent in the good and essential results which it alone produces in the penitent heart. When one appraises himself by God's requirement of him in His holy law, he will be convicted of sin and, in that conviction, will renounce it, if God has granted him repentance. Thus, the universal commandment for "all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30) is obeyed by the individual, and the Word of the Lord is fulfilled in him: "And He [the Holy Spirit], when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin" (Jn. 16:8, ASV).

It is with regard to this very matter of self-examination in the light of God's requirements that those who do not have a scriptural concept of sin come short. They compare themselves with everything but God's demands, and so, as the Apostle declares, "are not wise" (II Cor. 10:12). When serious consideration is given to the law's moral exactions, it will produce "the knowledge of sin," pursuant to its intent, with the acute sense of guilt and unworthiness before God, which will drive one to Christ for salvation. In this result, there will be precise conformity to the scriptural pattern for the conviction of sin. See Isa. 6:5; Acts 2:37; 9:6; 16:29-30. So does the law faithfully fulfill its mission of bringing to Christ those who give due heed to it (Gal. 3:24).

"In consequence of human sin, the law ceases to be a way of life, and becomes a tremendous indictment and condemnation." The Jews rested in the law and boasted of their relationship to God (Rom. 2:17-20; 9:4), when actually "they were simply custodians of their own condemnation." It is this condemning function of the law which we are to recognize. "It is then a most wholesome revealer of our real and lost condition. It drives us out of our refuge of lies and fancied merit, that we may betake ourselves to Christ alone. It is the light which exposes the dark chambers of our souls, and brings us to conviction and repentance. Let us make the proper use of the law, and it will, as a schoolmaster, bring us to Christ, "that we might be justified by faith."

The Knowledge of Salvation

When one comes to an adequate knowledge of sin and its power of death unto God, he is ready to receive with all readiness of mind and heart the blessed knowledge of salvation in the Son. It is only when one has served his due time under Moses as schoolmaster that the supernal glory of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" begins to dawn upon the soul (Rom. 3:24). Where there is not proper conviction of sin there will not be a true evaluation of "the great salvation" wrought by the Lord (Heb. 2:3). "Unto you which believe He is precious," as Peter remarks, and, of course, such

believing entails the knowledge of sin and the effectual deliverance from its filth and power which the Savior brings (I Pet. 2:7). Our realization of both the graciousness and glory of Christ Jesus as Redeemer is contingent upon our "tasting" of Him in that capacity, in keeping with the Apostle's observation in the same place (v. 3).

"How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!" exclaims Solomon (Prov. 16:16). Certainly, the priority of pursuit implied has its pre-eminent application to the subject of the Savior and His salvation. "By mercy and truth is iniquity purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil," the wise man declared in the same connection (v. 6). To be experientially initiated into these verities, and to trustfully rest in them, is to find the ultimate of heart-questing for this life. "By the knowledge of Himself shall My righteous Servant justify many; and He shall bear their iniquities," the Father promised beforehand concerning the Son (Isa. 53:11, ASV). And so it was, and is; and blessed, indeed, are the ones who obtain a lively awareness of that heavenly reality!

The Essence of This Knowledge. Most religious people do not seem to possess the full assurance of salvation and the joy thereof simply because they either are not aware of what constitutes salvation, or do not believe God's plain and emphasized commitments in the case. A true knowledge of salvation is simply to know, as we have said, what comprises lostness, on the one hand, so to speak, and then to know and receive what God, through Christ, has done for us about that tragic state. Further, it is to know the conditions of our participation in the remedy which God has wrought, to comply with those conditions, then to trustfully rely upon Him for the salvation thus provided and appropriated. At first thought, that may appear to be a complicated matter. Actually, however, it but encompasses the procedure succinctly set forth by John as believing "the record which God gave of His Son" (I Jn. 5:9-13).

It should be remarked at this point that the knowledge of salvation and salvation itself are two different things. The latter has to do with a state of acceptance with God in Christ; the former, with spiritual awareness of that blessed condition through the ministry of "the Spirit of sonship," bestowed upon us by God (Rom. 8:15, RSV). Many, it seems evident, possess salvation who have not yet laid hold upon the "full assurance of faith" concerning it (Heb. 10:22). Both enduements are essential to full maturity in Christ, and none should stop short in their divine relationship of their possession of them. It is our confirmed persuasion that God has given to some of us a special ministry for these times in the area of the knowledge by His people of their salvation in Christ, and it is our earnest desire and prayer that He will enable us to fulfill it, to the praise of His glory.

The Nature of Salvation. A clear grasp of the fundamental nature of "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 2:10) contributes immeasurably to one's knowledge of his possession of that salvation. Essentially, it consists in the forgiveness of sins, which was made possible to God by the death of His Son for the sinner. "By His own blood," it is declared, Jesus "entered once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" who receive Him (Heb. 9:11-15). God made "Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him," it is written in another place (II Cor. 5:21, ASV). Thus, "being now justified" by Christ's blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:6-9). This is salvation--to have been redeemed "to God" from the curse and alienation of sin by the death of His Son (Rev. 5:9-10; cf. I Pet. 3:18).

The logic of this nature of the case is apparent in the discernment of the character of sin, as we have sketched that character. It was sin--and that alone--which separated us from God, or constituted us lost (Isa. 59:1-3). When sin was "put away" by the sacri-

(KNOWLEDGE, Continued from Page 10)

of the Savior (Heb. 9:26), salvation, accordingly, was effected for all who flee to Him for refuge from God's righteous wrath against sin and the sinner (Heb. 6:18; cf. Mt. 3:7; Rev. 6:12-17). In the expiation of sin by Christ (Rom. 3:23-26), that which barred us from God was removed, and we who have received the Son are restored to Him. This is salvation in its root sense--to be in fellowship with God--just as lostness is to be in alienation from Him.

The great declaration of the Spirit by Daniel (Dan. 9:24) testified in advance of this grace which was to come to the race through the death of Jesus. The Lord's ministry was to "finish the transgression," "make an end of sins," "make reconciliation for iniquity," and to "bring in everlasting righteousness." Thus, in Christ, God has dealt "once for all" with sin, as the Apostles were wont to assert (Heb. 7:27; 9:26, 28; I Pet. 3:18). His justice was satisfied, sin being fully atoned for by the vicarious death of His Son. He can, therefore, now righteously forgive sin for those who receive Jesus as their Substitute, upon the solid foundation that Christ died for their sins and so propitiated them (I Jn. 2:1-2; cf. Rom. 3:26). So has God, in His blessed Son, devised and executed means, "that His banished be not expelled from Him" (II Sam. 14:14). Praise His holy, righteous, and merciful Name, now and forever!

It will be observed that this is precisely how Zacharias represented the situation in his renowned prophecy concerning the work of Jesus. The ministry of John the Baptist, he said, was to "go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give the knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins" (Lk. 1:76-77). The Jews had a radically mistaken notion about the salvation which Christ was to bring, deeming it to be a political and national deliverance and exaltation. John prepared the Lord's ways by seeking to correct that impression, declaring that it was to be a spiritual salvation, consisting in the forgiveness of sins. In demonstration of that verity, John preached repentance and administered "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mk. 1:4).

The Knowledge of Salvation. A universal consideration emerges from these circumstances. It is simply that the knowledge of salvation is for all who will submit to the conditions of that salvation's reception and fully believe God concerning Him whom they have received as Savior. It can, however, be had by no others. The conditions are so plain and simple that "wayfaring men, though fools," need not "err therein" (Isa. 35:8). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," promised the Savior Himself (Mk. 16:15-16). Speaking to believers, Peter, being full of the Spirit, commanded, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," and promised, "you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38, NASB; cf. ch. 10:48).

There is every reason for those who, "from the heart" (Rom. 6:17-18), have complied with these requirements to know that they are saved. God's integrity in the matter is on the line. They have His Word that their sins are forgiven, that they are accepted by Him in Christ, and all of the other promises and commitments applicable to their case are for them, as they "walk in newness of life," and cleave to the Lord Jesus (Acts 11:23; Rom. 6:4). The eunuch's assurance was based on these grounds, and we are told that "he went on his way rejoicing" in God and His salvation (Acts 8:35-39). It was the same with the Philippian jailer. Having believed "on the Lord Jesus Christ," he "was baptized, he and all his, straightway," and "rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house" (Acts 16:30-34).

A Means of Glorifying God

It is one of the high ironies of religious people that in some circles the very knowledge and assurance of one's salvation in Christ of which we have spoken is considered as presumption and is deeply resented. It is difficult to conceive of a grosser perversion

of truth in a given situation. We are commanded to have the "full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22), based, of course, squarely upon God's Word. And we are told that such full persuasion concerning God's trustworthiness in His commitments is glorifying to Him (Rom. 4:20). On the contrary, weakness of faith, or lack of it, is everywhere in Scripture condemned as reproaching the God professed. It thus is evident that those who have and exhibit the scriptural knowledge of salvation in Christ are well-pleasing to the Father and magnify His Name among men. On the other hand, those who are uncertain about their status with God, if they have embraced the Son, are displeasing to Him in their unbelief, and discredit before men that worthy Name by which they are called.

May all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, therefore, seek and glory in the sure knowledge of their salvation in Him. If they have not rendered the obedience which puts one into the Savior (Jn. 1:12; Gal. 3:26-27), may they obtain grace to hasten to do so. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand!" (Rom. 13:11-12). That done, let all doubt and uncertainty regarding the matter be put firmly away. God has promised to receive those who come to Him through His Son, forgiving them all their trespasses (Col. 2:10-15). "He is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23), and what He has promised He is both abundantly able to, and most certainly will, do (Rom. 4:20-21). Having "received the reconciliation" accomplished for us by Jesus, let us, accordingly, "rejoice in God" through Him, "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Rom. 5:11, ASV; II Cor. 5:18-19; Eph. 1:6). --The End--

"Come let us to the Lord our God
With contrite hearts return,
Our God is gracious, nor will leave
The contrite ones to mourn.

"His voice commands the tempest forth
And stills the stormy wave,
And though His arm be strong to smite,
'Tis also strong to save.

"Long hath the night of sorrow reign'd;
The dawn shall bring us light:
Christ shall appear, and we shall rise
With gladness in His sight."

--Author Unknown

"The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Ps. 34:18, NKJV).

"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not" (Lam. 3:22).

WANTED: Men and Women who are willing to turn from the present evil word and seek one which is soon to be revealed from heaven. Persons must be able to believe that God is, and that he will reward them, if they diligently seek after him. The benefits include; A great retirement package and everyone that applies will be accepted.

For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to die for the sins of the world. We have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Praise God for Jesus!

Robert Cobb

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The Year 2000 Refreshing Waters Renewal Heavenly Mindedness

Here is the list of sermon topics for the Refreshing Waters Renewal to be held in De Soto, Missouri this summer. (De Soto is approximately fifty miles south of St. Louis.)

The theme of the Renewal this year is *Heavenly Mindedness*. The dates for the Renewal are set for August 1 through 3, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of that week. Bill Dinwiddie ministers the Word at the assembly where the meetings are to be held. The following are a listing of topics to be dealt with either in sermon or discussion form.

- “Speaking of Heavenly Things” (Jn. 3:12)**
- “Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly Places” (Eph. 1:3)**
- “Jesus is Seated in Heavenly Places” (Eph. 1:20)**
- “Raised Up to Sit with Christ in Heavenly Places” (Eph. 2:6)**
- “God’s Wisdom is Being Made Known to Principalities and Powers in Heavenly Places” (Eph. 3:10)**
- “Partakers of the Heavenly Calling” (Heb. 3:1)**
- “Tasting of the Heavenly Gift” (Heb. 6:4)**
- “The Tabernacle: An Example and Pattern of Heavenly Things” (Heb. 8:5)**
- “Desiring a Heavenly Country” (Heb. 11:16)**
- “We have Come to The Heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22)**
- “We have a Better and Enduring Substance in Heaven” (Heb. 10:34)**
- “The Inheritance Reserved in Heaven” (I Pet. 1:4)**
- “There are Three that Bear Record in Heaven” (I Jn. 5:7)**
- “Rejoicing that Our Names are Written in Heaven” (Lk. 10:20; Heb. 12:23)**
- “Refusing not Him that Speaks from Heaven” (Heb. 12:25)**
- “Waiting for God’s Son from Heaven” (I Th. 1:10)**
- “The Resurrection Body: Our House from Heaven” (II Cor. 5:2)**

We are looking forward to another outstanding time of meeting this year! For more information, you may contact Michael Blakely. His address is: 4437 Chatham Drive, Brownsburg, IN 46112-8513. Telephone: (317) 293-9745. E-mail: DESMODROME@aol.com

Miscellaneous Observations and Reflections

“God is great, much greater than we realize.” --*Michael Lohrman*

“Jesus’ miracles were not flaunted about before men. They were not indiscriminately performed.” --*Michael Lohrman*

The Promise of Life. “The promise of eternal life without fleshly constraints is real, available, and promised by Jesus. God not only has the power to do this, but He will do it. Jesus said: ‘I am going to prepare a place for you.’ This is a place where righteousness and glory dwells.” --*Michael Lohrman*

About the Heavenly Jerusalem. With respect to the heavenly Jerusalem and all of its attendant glories, “it is not until we are elevated (by our faith) into the higher modes of thought and feeling that we shall have reached a standpoint from which we can command a view of this supernal state. Down in the valley of worldliness, under the shadow of the hills, and amid the exhalations and fogs of sensualities, it would be impossible to catch a glimpse of the King in His beauty, in the heavenly land that is afar off,” and to which we, by grace, are journeying. --*Adapted*

An Open Invitation to First Christian Church. We would like to extend an invitation to all who happen to be in our vicinity to visit us at First Christian. We would be happy to make your acquaintance. Our Lord’s day morning service (including singing, preaching, and the Lord’s supper) begins at 9:00, which is followed by Bible school at 10:30. Our evening service begins at 6:00. Tuesday evening at 7:00 is the time of our mid-week service. Dave Maddack is the preaching minister. Dave has been ministering on the prophets (Elijah and Elisha) in the morning service. In the Bible school he is leading us in a study of Matthew’s gospel, where there is opportunity for much profitable discussion. We are located at 495 S. Indiana, Crown Point, IN 46307. Our telephone is (219) 663-1853. --*Editor*

Who shall not Enter vs. They which are Written! “And there shall in no wise enter into” the holy city “any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27). In a word, all whose names are written in this book have, in measure, come to possess the same loathsome regard for sin that God does. But those who are *presently* involved with sinful defilements, working abominations, and *continuing* to be associated with the lie, these are *the kinds of persons* who clearly are *not* written in the book of life. It matters not at all if such ones were “once saved,” as the popular error rabidly affirms to the contrary. And as Paul declared in this connection, “The firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness’” (II Tim. 2:19). --*Editor*